

VZCZCXRO2285
OO RUEHDBU RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #0621/01 0760642
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 170642Z MAR 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATEWASHDC IMMEDIATE 7788
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000621

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: NURISTAN: SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT ONSECURITY, JULY
2008-FEBRUARY 2009

REF: KABUL 609

Classified By: PRT and Sub-National Governance Director Valerie C. Fowler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In the wake of increased violence in Nuristan, Governor Jamaluddin, appointed in November 2008, articulated his vision for security in the Province. Security has improved in western Nuristan, but a power vacuum in the province, resulting in large part from the lack of a provincial governor in Nuristan from early September through late November 2008 (see reftel), contributed to security declines in the central and eastern valleys. End Summary.

Governor Articulates Security Plan

12. (C) In response to deteriorating security in parts of Nuristan, Governor Jamaluddin articulated his vision to improve security, which consists of three elements: (1) building on the model used in Kamdesh by his predecessor Governor Tamim, convene district & security shuras to assist with local security; (2) increase both the Afghan army and police presence in the province; and (3) increase offensive operations by U.S. Forces. Jamaluddin's approach is a work in progress as he has not yet secured permanent funding to pay salaries and support for the security shuras, nor has his lobbying of Defense and Interior officials led to increased Afghan army and police forces. The Governor continues to discuss the possibility of increased U.S. Forces with U.S. commanders.

Western Valley Stability Continues to Improve

13. (U) One bright spot in Nuristan is the western valley where security continued to improve between July 2008 and February 2009. PRT elements and maneuver forces have been able to operate virtually unimpeded in road-accessible valleys. Tribal elders and two district administrators in western Nuristan are more actively engaged in contributing to general security as development continues to expand and impact more villages and people. The newly-appointed district administrator in Mandol is being viewed as an indication that the government presence in that area will contribute to overall positive trends in the western valley.

Security Declines in Central and Eastern Valleys

14. (U) CENTRAL VALLEY: Waygal District remains under the control of insurgents. Waygal's district capital, Wanat, was the site of a significant attack against U.S. forces in July 2008. The killing of nine U.S. soldiers was the single largest loss of American life in Afghanistan since 2001. Since then, U.S. forces have not been present in the central valley. Additionally, a mass poisoning of 200 people in

October 2008 was allegedly launched from Waygal. That event was followed a month later by a fire at the Ministry of Education,s offices in Parun in which a line director for education suffered minor injuries. Provincial officials claim that these recent attacks on the government were executed by Taliban but there were never public claims of responsibility, and these incidents were not independently confirmed by U.S. officials.

¶5. (SBU) Additionally, Wama district is facing increasing security problems on its border with Kunar Province, particularly along the Wama road on the Kunar side of the border. Many Nuristani government officials and contractors have been harassed, attacked, or briefly detained at illegal checkpoints. Despite pressure from the PRT, the Nuristani and Kunar governors and police chiefs have not yet come to a consensus solution. Local shuras have convened on several occasions to threaten each other with dire consequences for not protecting their respective portions of the road.

¶6. (C) EASTERN VALLEY (Pakistani border): Insurgents attempted to take by force the district of Barge Matal in October 2008. The Afghan army was dispatched to protect the district capital, while police together with armed local villagers were successful at thwarting the attack. After nearly two weeks of fighting, the district shura negotiated a temporary ceasefire with the local insurgent shadow government. The ceasefire remains in effect, but village elders (including the district administrator) fear further attacks are imminent. In addition, clashes with U.S. forces in the eastern district of Kamdesh continue with regularity. The Kamdesh security shura, founded by Governor Tamim,

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continues to meet and demonstrated some progress in improving security in early 2009.

¶7. (U) For more information on Nuristan, please visit Nuristan on intellipedia at:
[http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Nuristan Province](http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Nuristan_Province).

¶8. (U) This cable has been reviewed by the State Department regional advisor at Task Force Duke and the PRT Nuristan Commander.
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